5: Basedow D-5 (1911)1913 OI20 Tiwi OI20

396 501 climbing palm (*Calamus Australis*)[1] Holes are previously pierced through the [237 412] bark with an awl, made out of the leg-bone of a wallaby.

The stitches are made more secure and watertight by plastering them with [237 314] wax from the comb of the wild bee (*Trigona sp.*) or with one of the several resins so extensively used by all natives. The inside corners are caulked with plastic clay and fibre, or resin. Two stays or struts of fairly stout timber, cut to the required length and inserted at the points where the bark was reduced to half its thickness, keep the sides of the canoe apart. From these points, therefore, the sides of the canoe converge to the bow at one end and to the stern at the other while in between they are more or less parallel. The canoe, if there be any difference at all, is wider aft (74 cm.) than it is nearer the bow (55 cm.); the "fish-tail" incision, too, is acute and deep at the bow and more rounded and shallow at the stern (*vide* Plate XI, Figs. 1 and 2). Along the top, inner, edge of either side of the canoe, a straight strengthening pole is lashed with distant unequally-spaced and grouped "run on" stitches of cane-strips. These structures lend considerable rigidity to the gunwale of the canoe; they do not extend throughout the whole length, but, being straight, are more or less parallel one to another, and do not enclose the stern or bow. Major Campbell,[2] in referring to the bark canoes seen by him while at Fort Dundas, states that "the gunwales are strengthened by two small saplings (such as grow in marshy places) fastened together at each end of the canoe." This method is more like that in use on the coast of the Gulf of Carpentaria to-day and was not observed on the islands by me. Long shoots of vines and strips of cane are wound crosswise from side to side of the canoe, and at the same time take in the strengthening-pole along the gunwale. Additional circumferential winding binds the separate cords into one thick rope. Four of such ties are spanned at equal distances, from one side to the other, along the straight edges of the canoe. They not only preserve its shape, but afford a ready means by which the craft may be carried.

501 [531] The canoe is not decorated in any way, but smears of various colours are noticed both at the bow and the stern, resulting from the handling by fingers previously occupied in decorative work with ochre. When not in use the canoes are "housed" on a level piece of ground, under the overhanging branches of a shady banyan or guttapercha tree. They are laid in normal upright position (not inverted), and are kept so by short supports of timber stemmed against the sides. The bark thus dries in the required shape and does not become lop-sided.

[487] Each canoe has its recognized place. Where a dense growth of mangroves skirts the foreshore, a regular approach to the water is kept clear by cutting away the trees. The paddles are laid within the canoes.

Quite a large number of natives may be carried in a canoe, if the occasion

[1] Compare narrative of Mr. Carron in MacGillivray's *Narrative Voyage H.M. "Rattlesnake,"* 1852, vol. ii, pp. 125 and 126; also P. P. King: *Narrative Survey Intertropical Western Coasts of Australia*, London, 1827, vol. i, p. 90.

[2] *Proc. Roy. Geog. Soc.*, London, vol. iv, 1834, p. 156.